2975 Laurel Street #20
San Diego, California 92104
August 7, 1989

Dear Tonna & the Wilson gang,

Thanks a lot for the nice birthday card and letter. It was great to hear from you. I do appreciate getting all the news. Wish I could have been with you on that fabulous vacation. I've never been to Egypt or France or Spain. I guess I'd have traveled more in Europe if it wasn't for the language problem.

You spoke of 36" of rainfall so far this year. Wish we could get some of that here. We are in our third summer ina row of drought. Water conservation is the word of the day — every day. "In this land of drought and sun, we don't flush for number one."

I'm send you this thick packet of material about some special event in my life since I saw you last because it will save me some time writing about them. Hope it's not over whelming. Some of the copied newsprint photos aren't the best, but you'll get the idea. You can see that the local press (both gay and non-gay) have been very kind to me. Things with the Archives are never fast enough for me but we are making progress and expect to move into a place where we can put the collection on public view before the end of this year. To that end I am currently working on a pledge drive, the goal of which is to generate a minimum of $1000 per month, and a benefit concert set for early December. So I keep busy.

Healthwise, I am currently more physically challenged than I have been for a long time. Between August of '88 and May of '89 I was hospitalized 7 times with various stages of pneumonia, fevers in 105 to 106 range, collapsed lung, etc. Still, through all of this I've been able to continue my community work and have found that very gratifying and uplifting.

My community has bestowed every honor and award upon me that they hadn't already given me in years past. Twice within the last year, the Mayor and the City Council have declared "Jess Jessop Day" in San Diego to honor me on special occasions. The Gay Center recently held their first annual Founders Banquet and selected me (as one of the founders) to be their first honoree. Among other awards I was presented with the first "Jess Jessop Founders Award" which will be presented annually to some individual for outstanding community service. It was a great tribute to have this annual award named after me. For these and many other reasons the last two years have been the best of my life.

Prior to diagnosis, when I was beginning to have suspicious symptoms, I was terrified about the possibility of developing AIDS due to concerns of being alone and socially isolated. I had already given up sex, and was doing OK with that, but I knew that I couldn't survive without being touched. My fears were all for naught. I am surrounded by warm, loving, nurturing men and women who look out for me constantly, often admonishing me for "working too hard". They cook and clean, do my laundry, wash my car, and grocery shop depending on my level of strength. My most difficult task is admitting that I need help from time to time.

Since January, I have been in a chronic state of bronchitis and sinusitis which only varies in intensity depending on what antibiotic I'm on. But during the past 3 to 4 weeks I've noticed that the problem seems more deeply rooted in my chest. It is difficult to explain in objective terms, but I have a sense of non-well-being in my inner core. Last Thursday, I had a chest X-ray which showed that nodules that had been visible in the past in my lower lobes are now vastly in creased in size and

number. So we did a bronchoscopy in an attempt to biopsy some of those nodules and other lesions. But I coughed vigorously throughout the proceedure, making biopsy impossible. I am now waiting on the results of laboratory tests run on the washings that the doctor was able to get. If those results are diagnostic of the suspected atypical tuberculosis or fungus infection or both, I will immediately be started on the appropriate drugs. If those lab results aren't diagnostic, I will be admitted to the hospital and go to surgery for a trans-thoracic biopsy. I have one lesion that is very different from the rest and my doctor is very suspicious that that lesion might be Kaposi's sarcoma. I doubt that.

It is important that we get an accurate diagnosis, since we can treat the TB or the fungus (though they are both serious problems in people with AIDS). If it is KS there is nothing to do, as I will not submit to chemotherapy. So I sit and wonder. By this time tomorrow I could be in the hospital awaiting diagnostic surgery. I hate to give you incomplete information, but the reality is that if I have surgery, it may be some time before I am able to write.

I want you to understand that I am not afraid. I have had ample time to prepare myself for whatever comes along. My life has handed me just the right experiences to strengthen me and to enable me to meet whatever lies ahead. My spirits are good and I am optimistic. I don't like giving you information that may seem a bit grim, because as loving friends, I know that it may be stressful. But to withhold such information would be unfair to you.

I lost my voice about 3 weeks ago due to frequent and violent coughing spells that often progress to gaging and vomiting, so I am not very good on the phone. However, if I am hospitalized, I will have someone make a new recording for my answering machine explaining where I am. So, if you wish, in a few days you could call for information (619-280-7411). If you get my voice on the recording, you'll at least know that I am not in the hospital. If I answer in person, be prepared for a raspy sort of whisper. (Many people are thankful for this development.)

I am, by no means, giving up. I am determined to get through this. I know that love heals. I have learned to love myself and others. I am surrounded by loving gentle people. I can't ask for more than that.

My love to all of you,

Jean